

gravest faults he can commit to allow a daughter or sister to arrive at puberty (generally eight years) before a husband has been found for her. It is a disgrace for a family to have in it an unmarried marriageable girl. What is proper is that, from five to sixteen days after puberty, the previously married husband shall beget with her a child in a solemn ceremonial which is one of the twelve (or sixteen) sacraments of Hindoo life.¹ The idea of child marriage was that the woman should be already married to her chosen husband, so that she might be given to him at the proper time.² Moreover, " marriage completes, for the man, the regenerating ceremonies, expiatory, as is believed, of the sinful taint which every child is supposed to contract in the mother's womb ; and being, for sudras and for women, the only [ceremony for this purpose] which is allowed, its obligatoriness is, as to the latter, one of the ordinances of the Veda." ³

400. The wife of the missionary Gehring was present at the marriage of a girl of ten to an adult man amongst the Tamil Mohammedans. The story of the child's shrinking terror is very pathetic. When her veil was withdrawn she fainted from nervousness and excitement. Those present showed no pity for her, but crowded around to enjoy the opportunity of gazing at her. They saw no reason why she was to be pitied.⁴

401. If a girl has had no husband provided for her by her responsible male relative, she may act for herself, but then she forfeits her share in the family property. She may be abducted with impunity. In Manu ⁶ it is said that three years must elapse before she gets the right of self-disposition. The right is long since a dead letter. The " Law of Manu " can lose its authority where it is favorable to women! or when it runs

counter to the
mores, for Hindoo women have no training to take
up self-dis-
position, if the case occurs.⁶ Female virtue is
rated low, and
must be secured by marriage. Independent
action by a boy and
girl is against the mores and could only lead to
inferior forms

¹ Jolly, *Recht und Sitte der Indo-Arier*, 54, 58.

² Jolly, *Stellung der Frauen bei den alten Indern* ^ 425.

³ Strange, *Hindzt Law*, I, 35. ⁶ IX, 90.

⁴ Gehring, *Sud-Indien*, 78, 80. ⁶ *Jo. Soc. Comp. Legist* ^ N. S. >
VIII, 253.